

Sr. Constance Fitzgerald

Sr. Constance Fitzgerald was born November 13, 1913 in Spokane, Washington. She grew up in Riverside, California and entered religious life on September 18, 1930.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet welcomed Sr. Constance as the second member of her family to become a Sister of St. Joseph in the Los Angeles Province. Four years later a younger sister also entered the community.

Sr. Constance received the habit of the Sisters of St. Joseph on the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19, 1931 and made her first vows as a Sister in 1933.

From 1933 to 2017, Sr. Constance ministered at 24 missions throughout the Province. These missions ranged from San Diego to Vallejo, California and included schools in Los Angeles, Fresno, Oakland, Banning, San Francisco, Torrance and San Fernando. In Arizona she taught at the Sisters high schools in Tucson and in Prescott.

During her years of ministry, Sr. Constance taught the primary grades, and then grades 4th through the 8th. She served both as a vice-principal and principal in various schools. In high schools, Sr. Constance taught English and Religion.

Beginning in 1988, Sr. Constance taught ESL to Farmworkers in the San Joaquin Valley and studied Spanish while being a director of a shelter for "Homeless Old Men" in Guaymas, Mexico.

From 1995 to 2002, Sr. Constance was a tutor at Mount St. Mary's University on the Doheny Campus in Los Angeles. Then she took on being a volunteer regarding Justice issues from 2003 to 2016.

She moved to the Retirement Center of the Sisters of St. Joseph on May 6, 2016.

A few stories are in order.

When Sr. Constance celebrated her 85th Anniversary as a Sister of St. Joseph in 2015, she led the procession down the center aisle of Our Lady of the Angels Cathedral in Los Angeles. Being a 102 at the time, she walked without a cane.

In September 1948, Sr. Constance taught the entire 9th Grade curriculum to the students at St. Boniface Indian School in Banning, CA, so that they would not have to attend the local Junior High School before going to the High School in Banning.

In September 1949, Sr. Constance opened St. Basil School in Vallejo, CA with the oldest grade being the 5th grade. In the following years, she taught the same class in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades while being their principal. She continued being the principal there until 1955.

P.S. Prepared by Sister Mary Murphy CSJ, Historian and Sr. Constance's travelling companion